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ABSTRACT

A project is being conducted to provide vocational training for severely emotionally disturbed students in the Salem, Oregon, School District. Most of the youths have previously been institutionalized, and many are retarded and have other handicaps such as learning disabilities, epilepsy, and speech and language disorders. All students qualify for special education services and attend a high school program serving students who are emotionally disturbed. Students are placed into job sites by a vocational trainer, taking into account student preferences, geographic accessibility, and student behavior. Students are first placed in nonpaid positions, then moved into paid positions when they have completed two nonpaid training positions and are within two years of graduation. Although most students learn to do work tasks quickly, training focuses on the acquisition of associated work skills necessary to maintain the work placement. Trainers work with the students during the initial phases of training/placement, then gradually withdraw until students can work independently. Many of the 15 placements have been successful, although 8 students were fired for inappropriate behavior. The program has been functioning for five years and has demonstrated that students with serious emotional disturbances can be prepared for competitive employment in community work experience placements. (KC)

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PREPARED BY THE STAFF OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Teaching Research, Monmouth, Oregon 97361 Vol. XV, No. 5, December 1987

The purpose of this newsletter is to share with you our activities and projects. Each issue features a different project or activity. This issue describes the Community-Based Vocational Training Project and was prepared by Vicki Evans.

A list of our demonstration sites and those who manage them follows:

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  - Parent Training Clinic: Carol Bunse
  - Toddler Program: Kim Udell
  - Integrated Preschool: Tom Udell
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  - Elementary Classroom for Students with Severe Handicaps, Independence: Patty Binder
- Training Staff: Torry Templeman, Carol Bunse, Joyce Peters, Gary Glasenapp, Lori Doede
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  - Vocational Program for Adolescents, Marion County: Dennis Gifford
- Residential Supervisor: Debbi Kraus
  - Group Home and Apartments for Adolescents, Marion County: Sue Birge, Dan Terry
  - Foster Parent Training: Debbi Kraus

Vocational Training for Students Who Are Seriously Emotionally Disturbed

Introduction

This article describes a community-based vocational training project serving students with severe emotional disturbances. The project trains students to adjust to the demands of competitive employment.

Since almost 25% of an adult's life is spent in a vocational endeavor, the preparation of students for that portion of their life is extremely important. For the seriously emotionally disturbed student, the population upon which we are focusing, employment after high school is generally a major concern. While many of these students have little difficulty learning to perform a specific job, their employment histories are frequently poor because of their social behavior on the job.

This project demonstrates that with good training the individual with severe emotional disturbances will be accepted by the community of workers and become employed.

Population

The students in this project are the most severely disturbed served by Salem School District in Oregon. They are referred from throughout Oregon. Most of these youth have been previously placed in McClaren (Oregon's juvenile correctional institution), the Oregon State Hospital (the state institution for the mentally ill) and Fairview Training Center (Oregon's state institution for the mentally retarded/developmentally disabled). Others have been unsuccessfully served by other state resources. Many of these students have secondary disabilities including mental retardation, severe learning disabilities, epilepsy, speech, and language disorders. Ten of the students reside in two 5 bed Teaching Research residential

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programs located in the cachement area of the Salem School District.

Although IQ's were not administered as part of this program, such information is available from school records. IQ's, previous placement information, and primary reasons for referral are shown in Table 1. Age of students range from 12 to 19 years. All students qualify for special education services and attend a high school classroom serving students who are seriously emotionally disturbed. Some of the students are also mainstreamed into regular education classes for part of the day.

Job Placement

Students are placed into job sites by a vocational trainer. The following factors are considered in matching the worksite to the student:

1) Student Preferences: Upon placement, students are interviewed to determine job preferences and past work experiences. Whenever possible, student preferences are given priority in the job selection process.

2) Geographic Accessibility: The goal of this project is to teach students to become as independent as possible in maintaining their worksite. A large factor influencing this goal is the student's ability to independently transport to and from work. Methods of transportation used by students include bus, walking, and biking.

3) Student Behaviors: The history of each student is carefully reviewed so that inappropriate job sites are not selected as work placements. Job sites considered inappropriate are those that put the student at risk for criminal reoffenses i.e., a student with a history of child molesting is not placed in child care. Students who might exhibit disruptive behaviors such as tantrumming or aggression at the job site are placed on jobs that provide isolated work areas that allow the student and trainer privacy if needed.

After potential worksites are identified, initial contacts with employers are made by phone to arrange a meeting. At the meeting, the program is explained. Non-paid positions are sought initially and specific tasks for the student to complete are identified. The list of tasks assigned by the employer often expand as the student demonstrates competency at work. Once the student demonstrates proficiency in both the work tasks and associated work skills required by the work position the student is moved to another worksite for further training or the employer is approached for wages. Pay is usually only sought for students who are within two years of graduation or have completed at least two volunteer work placements successfully. If the student is not that advanced in the program and if the job cannot be expanded so that the student would learn more skills, then the student is moved to a different job.

If the student is within two years of graduation or has completed two worksites successfully, and the employer indicates that wages are not possible, the student is moved to another worksite. If the student is hired, the trainer maintains follow-up contacts by telephone or in person to ensure that the student continues to do well on the job.

Training

The final goal of all training is independent performance on the part of the student. The majority of students learn to do work tasks very quickly after an initial demonstration. However, for most students training focuses on the acquisition of associated work skills necessary to maintain the work placement. A list of associated work skills is shown in Figure 1. Usually each targeted associated work skill is taught using a Formal Behavior Treatment approach.

During the initial stages of training, the trainer is with the student during the full job period. As the student progresses in the job, the trainer systematically phases himself out of the job site so that the student learns to respond to the worksite employer. This phase-out process generally occurs in four phases described as follows:

Phase I: Total supervision by vocational trainer. All behavioral consequences issued by the vocational trainer.

Phase II: Intermittent checks with vocational trainer on-site at the business. All behavioral consequences issued by the vocational trainer.

Phase III: Intermittent checks by vocational trainer. The trainer does not remain on-site at the business. Behavioral consequences issued by vocational trainer and employer.

Phase IV: Student works independently with minimal checks and/or is hired. Behavioral consequences issued by employer.

Several techniques are used to encourage the worksite employer to interact with the student worker. These techniques include having the worksite employer assign tasks to the student, coaching the employer to manage the student worker and using a travel card on which the employer grades the student's performance daily.

Results

Table 2 shows a list of student placements, the length of each placement, and the reason for termination.

A sample of the variety of job skills taught at various worksites is shown in Table 3. The table shows the student and the type of tasks mastered at the worksite during training.

A sample of associated work skills learned by students is shown in Table 4. Baseline data were taken over a one week period and the data reported are the weekly averages.

Efforts have been made to determine community acceptance of this type of an approach to training students and preparing them for competitive employment. Information and data regarding employers follows:

A total of 43 employers have participated in this training project. Twenty-nine or 68% of these employers have accepted a second student for training or have indicated willingness to accept another student. Ten out of 43 or 23% employers have stated they are unwilling to accept another student and/or the project deemed them as unacceptable. Four businesses have closed and are no longer available. Table 5 shows this project's employer profile which provides guidelines in determining whether a worksite is an acceptable placement. This employer profile has been developed as a result of this project to assist in determining whether a worksite would be a successful training site.

Discussion

This program has been functioning for 5 years. Initially vocational training occurred at the school with students assigned janitorial and kitchen duties. This arrangement was unsatisfactory due to work conditions that failed to adequately simulate competitive employment, workers being teased by other students and workers being viewed as different from the general student body. As a result of that experience, we developed this project,

placing students in competitive jobs in the community.

This community-based vocational training project has demonstrated that students with serious emotional disturbances can be prepared for competitive employment in community work experience placements. It has demonstrated that inappropriate behaviors exhibited at work sites are generally less severe than those exhibited in previous educational environments. An examination of Table 2 shows a high number of students (8 out of 15) who were fired; of these, two were fired more than one time. In a program such as this, the fact that a student is fired can develop positive aspects. Many of the students learned through their job experiences that certain behaviors will not allow them to retain a job. For this population, it is much better that such learning occur in the school years where assistance is available to help the student adjust to future job placements. Most of these students have a long history of poor social behaviors in school and in residential environments. Therefore, it is understandable when they also exhibit such behaviors in job situations. Table 2 shows that four of the reasons for students being fired were training reasons, and six were fired in response to an actual employer request. Four of the students who were fired only once were able to successfully complete work placements after being fired. Nevertheless, there are discouraging aspects of these data. Such are manifested by students 10 and 14. Both were successfully employed for more than six months and then were fired, one for theft and one for difficulties with fellow employees.

However, there were twenty-one successful placements across fifteen students. In addition, there are seven more successful ongoing placements. We believe that because of a decided improvement over time in the vast majority of these students in the work environment that, given more opportunities for work experience under such a structured program, students who are emotionally disturbed can be assisted to succeed ultimately in the world of work.

The program described in this article provides an essential educational program to students who are seriously emotionally disturbed. The purpose of this program is to teach students to successfully cope with the social and work demands of his/her post school work settings. Although more time is needed to report long range results and impact upon the working community and the student worker, this type of training seems to be a viable approach to successfully dealing with one aspect of the educational needs of students who are seriously emotionally disturbed.

Table 1.

List of students, IQ's, Previous Placements and Reasons for Referral

STUDENT	IQ	PREVIOUS PLACEMENT	REASONS FOR REFERRAL
1	Wisc-R 71	Oregon State Mental Hospital	Runaway, severe aggression, theft, sexual abuse victim, repeated school failure
2	Wisc-R 82	Natural Home, SED Classroom	Repeated school failure, aggression, non-compliant, bizarre noises
3	Wisc-R 71	Fairview Training Center	Prostitution, drug abuse, assault, tantrum, non-compliance, school failure
4	Wisc-R 62	Fairview Training Center	Assault, prostitution, non-compliance, school failure
5	Wisc-R 71	Fairview Training Center	Sex offender, fire setting, school failure
6	Wisc-R 76	Foster Care, Home tutor	Assault, non-compliance, school failure
7	Wisc-R 70's	Natural Home, SED Classroom	Severe aggression, non-compliance, tantrumming, school failure, enuresis
8	Wechsler 74	Christie School for Girls	Non-compliance, enuresis, assault, sex abuse victim
9	Wisc-R 64	Natural Home, Home Tutor	Sex offender, non-compliance, school failure
10	Wisc-R 82	McClaren Juvenile Correctional Institution	Assault, non-compliance, tantrum, school failure
11	Wisc-R 82	Oregon State Mental Hospital	Suicidal, tantrum, non-compliant
12	Wisc-R 73	Fairview Training Center	Sex offender
13	Wisc-R 60's	Waverly Residential School	Tantrum, non-compliant, childish
14	Wisc-R 93	Natural home, Public school	Theft, school failure, non-compliance
15	Wisc-R 70	Natural Home, Day Treatment Center	Runaway, theft, non-compliance, inappropriate school behaviors

Work Related Behavior

1. Observes basic rules of setting
2. Follows established routine/schedule
3. Works independently on specific tasks
4. Works cooperatively in group setting
5. Remains on-task during work period
6. Works at appropriate rate/speed
7. Finished work is satisfactory quality
8. Punctual in arriving to work
9. Punctual in returning from lunch/break
10. Uses time card
11. Follows safety procedures of setting
12. Uses safety gear
13. Respond to emergency situations

Mobility Transportation

14. Transports self to work
15. Locates essential sites at work setting (bathroom, etc.)

Self-Help Grooming

16. Clothing appropriate for work setting
17. Maintains satisfactory personal hygiene

Social Communication

18. Notifies supervisor when sick/ injured
19. Notifies supervisor for planned absences
20. Engages in appropriate conversation
21. Interactions with co-workers does not affect work
22. Accepts constructive feedback from supervisor
23. Asks for assistance when needed
24. Complies with supervisor's request
25. Does not display self-indulgent behavior
26. Does not display aggressive behavior

Figure 1. List of Associated Work Skills

Table 2
Sample List of Placements for Students

STUDENT	PLACEMENT	LENGTH OF PLACEMENT	REASONS FOR TERMINATION
1	N.S. Khalsa	3 mos.	Placement Complete
	Salem Public Library	4 mos.	Fired: Theft - Training Decision
	Capital Motor Inn (Maid)	1 1/2 mo.	Placement Complete
	Capital Motor Inn (Kitchen)	2 mos.	Fired: Unsafe Behavior - Employer Request
	Salem Garden Supply	1 mos.	Fired: Attendance Problems Due to Runaway Behavior - Training Decision
	Southside Vet	2 mos.	Placement Complete
	N.S. Khalsa	7 mos.	Fired: Unsafe Behavior - Training Decision
2	Roth's IGA	3 mos.	Placement Complete
	Tamale Factory	3 days	Student Request
	Pet Peddler	2 mos.	Placement Complete
	Pietro's	5 mos.	Fired: Theft - Employer Request
	Speedy Mart	2 mos.	Ongoing
3	Executive Motor Inn	1 mo.	Placement Complete
	Kidspace	7 mos.	Student Moved
	N.S. Khalsa	3 days	Student Moved
4	N.S. Khalsa	1 mo.	Fired: Aggression - Employer Request
	Jory Hill Stables	1 mo.	Placement Ended
	Roth's	7 mos.	Ongoing
5	Round Table Pizza	2 mos.	Ongoing
6	Southside Veterinary	14 mos.	Placement Complete
	Pietro's	2 mos.	Placement Complete
7	Roth's IGA	6 mos.	Placement Complete
	Associated Animal Hospital	3½ mos.	Fired: Attendance - Training Decision
	Southside Veterinary	½ mo.	Student Request
	N.S. Khalsa	2 mos.	Placement Complete
	Tamale Factory	3½ mos.	Store Closed

Table 2
Sample List of Placements for Students (continued)

STUDENT	PLACEMENT	LENGTH OF PLACEMENT	REASONS FOR TERMINATION
8	Student Services	4 mos.	Placement Complete
	Oregon School for the Blind	2½ mos.	Placement Complete
	Mirage	2 mos.	Ongoing
9	Hospice	6 mos.	Ongoing
	N.S. Khalsa	7 days	Ongoing
10	Saga Foods	10 mos.	Fired: Theft - Employer Request
11	Sunnyside Care Center	6 mos.	Placement Complete
12	Tamale Factory	1½ mos.	Fired: Poor Hygiene - Training Decision
	Smith Auditorium	8 mos.	Placement Complete
	Transformed Plastics	2 weeks	Hired Relief (Ongoing)
13	Volunteer Services	3 mos.	Placement Complete
	Salem Public Library		Placement Complete
	A Cut Above	2 mos.	Placement Complete
	Sunnyside Care Center	2 mos.	Placement Complete
	Sunshine Pizza	5 mos.	Store Closed
14	Motor Pool	5½ mos.	Placement Complete
	Albertson's	8 mos.	Fired: Co-worker Problems - Employer Request
	Judson's Plumbing	1 mo.	Placement Complete
15	Sunshine Pizza	4 mos.	Placement Complete
	Heliotrope	2 wks.	Fired: Unsafe Behavior - Employer Request
	Albertson's	4 mos.	Fired: Theft - Training Decision
	N.S. Khalsa	4 mos.	Student Moved

Table 3

Worksite and Types of Tasks Taught to Students

	WORK SITE	POSITION	DUTIES	
1.	Roth's IGA	Courtesy Person	Bottle Sort	Stock Freezer
			Constructing Boxes	Recycle Card Board
			Sweep/Mop Floors	Washes Windows
			Operate Box Crusher	Cleans Bathrooms
2.	Sunshine Pizza	Kitchen Help	Salad Preparation	Wash Windows
			Slicing Vegetables	Taking Orders to Customers
			Grating Cheese	Make Tomato Sauce
			Pizza Preparation	Stock Shelves
			Wiping/Bussing tables	Cook French
			Sweeping/Mopping Floors	Fries/Hamburgers
3.	Sunnyside Care	Volunteer	Assist in Bulletin Board Project	Delivered Packages
			Coloring/Tracing Letters	Transported Residents to Activities
			Read Letters to Residents	Maintaining Linen Closet
4.	Tamale Factory	Kitchen Help	Cutting Tortilla Chips	Watering Outside
			Cutting Tomatoes/Vegetables	Cleaning Halls
			Stocking Refrigerator	Cleaning Stairway
			Setting Tables	
5.	Capitol Motor	Maid	Folding Sheets/Towels	Making Beds
			Removing Linen From Dryer	Cleaning Bathrooms
			Restocking Linen Shelves	Vacuuming
			Cleaning Rooms	Dusting

Table 4.
A Sample of Associated Work Skills Learned by Students

Student	Behavior	Baseline Date	Baseline Data	Finish Date	Finish Data
1	Interrupting	10/6/86	2 per day	11/12/86	0
	Unpleasant Tone of Voice	10/6/86	2.3 per day	11/12/86	0
2	Negative Comments	10/12/86	18.34 per day	12/1/86	0
3	Arguing	7/18/86	2 per day	11/6/86	0
	Negative Comments	7/18/86	10 per day	11/6/86	0
4	Compliance	1/26/87	64%	2/27/87	90%
	Lying	10/31/87	1 per day	11/86	0
		6/3/87	.67 per day	11/2/86	0
9	Bus Transportation	10/6/86	76%	11/20/86	100%
10	Inappropriate Comments	10/6/86	1 per day	11/20/86	0.2 per day
12	Personal Hygiene	10/2/86	67%	11/14/86	100%
13	Bus Transportation	1/17/87	63%	3/5/87	100%

Table 5. Employer Profile

Acceptable Requires Minimal Trainer Support	Unacceptable Employer
Interested in training job skills	Unwilling to accept some behavior problems
Willingness to accept some behavior problems and work to remediate them	Unwilling to work with workers with physical/mental disabilities
Accepting of workers with physical/mental disabilities	Not willing to have a job trainer on-site
Monitors all workers including student trainees	Unwilling to adopt work-site to disabled employers
Will be willing to have a job trainer on-site	Does not monitor all workers on-site
Willing to adapt some parts of the work place to accommodate disabled workers	Not flexible in scheduling hours/days
Flexible in hours/days and scheduling	Has obvious personnel problems
Maintains a good rapport with all employees	Does not monitor safety on-site
Maintains adequate safety on the work-site	General overall negative response to program needs

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Project TIES

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MATERIALS LIST

The following is a list of materials developed by Teaching Research with prices and publishers from whom they may be purchased.

Associated work skills: A manual. The Teaching Research Special Education Department Staff. Teaching Research Publications, Monmouth, Oregon 97361, 1984. $10.00

A data based classroom for the moderately and severely handicapped (4th Ed.). Fredericks, H. D., and the Staff of the Teaching Research Infant and Child Center. Teaching Research Publications, Monmouth, Oregon 97361, 1982. $14.50

Integrated educational service delivery models for severely handicapped children and/or youth materials:
- Implementation strategies for integration: An administrator's manual. $3.50
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- Communication placement assessment for children and students with severe handicaps. $3.00
- Communication curriculum for children and students with severe handicaps. $22.50
- Signs of the time: Sign Language lessons for the Elementary grades. $4.50
- Resources for parents' questionnaire. $2.00

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Transition for Persons with Deaf-Blindness and other Profound Handicaps. Fredericks, H. D., Covert, A. Teaching Research Publications, Monmouth, Oregon 97361, 1987. $10.00

Vocational Training for Students with Severe Handicaps. H. D. Bud Fredericks and Staff of the Teaching Research Vocational Training Model. Teaching Research Publications, Monmouth, Oregon 97361, 1987. $13.00

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Recommended Reading

Friends. Edrington, M. Instructional Development Corp., P.O. Box 361, Monmouth, Oregon 97361, 1979. $6.75

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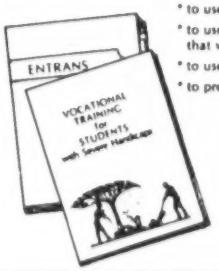

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